



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Bay County staff continue giving the gift of life

From Joan Tacey, Family Independence Specialist
Bay County DHS Blood Drive Chairperson

TaceyJ@michigan.gov

BAY CITY – Bay County DHS held their first onsite blood drive in several years March 31. Due to low numbers of donors in the past, we were invited to give across the street at the Medical Mall where the Blood Bus was parked for three hours.

The State Employee Blood Challenge has drawn more attention and interest in donating. I chaired our first drive on Jan. 6. Even though we had to go across the street, we had eleven participants willing to roll up their sleeves, including a first-time donor. We collectively donated eight pints of blood, enough for the Blood Center to give us the Blood Bus the next time for three hours in our own parking lot! The number of participants increased to 15 at our most recent drive and 12 pints were drawn. That's one and one-half gallons of blood!

First-time donor **Laura Dockham**, a Bay County family independence specialist, said giving was "very easy; simple." Another FIS, **James Maze**, reached a milestone when he gave. Jim received his two-gallon pin and was also the lucky winner of a "Got blood? Give some!" tee shirt. Jim said he gives because, "You never know when you or someone in your family might need it."

Eligibility specialist **Amy Majeski** shared her thoughts on being a donor. "I'm thankful to work for a state agency that recognizes the importance of donating blood and gives us the opportunity to give during the workday," she said. "Time is a very big factor for me."

Another donor was **Chris Elliott**, children's protective services specialist. Chris was relieved from his busy telephone intake assignment by a fellow worker so he could give before the drive ended at 5 p.m.

I look forward to chairing our next blood drive scheduled for July 6. Bay County DHS is proud to participate in the Blood Challenge and will continue to give the gift of life.

■ Visit www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral and click on the State Employees Blood Challenge icon for more info.



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Left: Joan Tacey in and the Blood Bus.

Below: First-time donor Laura Dockham after she completed her donation.



Spring calendar

Administrative Professionals Day
Wednesday, April 26

Sunday, May 14: Mother's Day

Monday, May 29: Memorial Day

June 5-16: School's out!

Father's Day
Sunday, June 18

Date: April 13
To: Susan Hull, Director
Ingham County DHS
Subj: Terri Shaler

I wanted to share some nice information given to me today. Deborah Christopherson, who works in DHS Accounting Division in the (Lansing), does some volunteer work helping people prepare their income tax returns. A lady she worked with recently related how wonderful her DHS worker was.

The lady went on and on about how much the worker does for her, how friendly she is, how she helped do so much for her, and how she considers the worker to be so important to her. This lady offered this information without knowing that Deb works for DHS. The FIS worker's name is Terri Shaler.

I am very glad to share this kind of story and thought you might like to let Terri know we have heard very good things about her and how she represents the department. It is always nice to hear good things about our staff.

Al Holzhausen

DHS Field Operations
Lansing

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: April 4
To: Mike Sullivan, Family Independence Specialist
Otsego County DHS, Gaylord
Subj: Thanks

With your help and understanding, the stress level of having to worry about where our net meal was coming from, how to keep the babies warm, and the general welfare of our family has been lifted. We tried so very hard to do it on our own but realized we needed help.

With the grace of God and your help we can live a close to normal life.

Renee and I both needed health insurance for certain and unique circumstances and it is such a blessing to have that now. We need to be in as good health as possible. Step in Mike and we can be well again. Our family, extended and blended as it is, will be filled with warmth of propane and the glow of knowing someone stepped to the plate when we so badly needed help.

This shows our kids that there are (people) that can get through the bureaucracy of government and get help for those (us in particular) who truly need the system and don't abuse it for everything they can, but for what is a necessary to sustain a decent life and home.

Tim & Renee Nielson

Gaylord

■ Cindy Pushman, director of Otsego County DHS, submitted this letter.

Date: March 28
To: Richard Chaltry
Subj: Thanks

I received your (transit) form for the trip you attempted on March 13 in which you ended up in an accident. I am processing the payment for the 12 miles but \$3.94 seems such a small compensation for \$4,855 in vehicle damage and a \$250 deductible for you. I am so glad you and your passenger were not injured in the accident. It was terrible that day and the roads had become very dangerous very quickly. I appreciate the concern you showed for your passenger; you even called me right away out of concern for her missed medical appointment despite having been shook up in the accident and having your personal vehicle damaged to such an extent.

I checked into seeing if there is anything we can do to assist you with your deductible but unfortunately we are not allowed to use our funding for such purposes. I know this could happen anytime and volunteers have to be responsible for their insurance, tickets, and accidents. It must occur to anyone volunteering that, if they had just said "no" that day,

circumstances would have been better for them. Unfortunately, doing good deeds does not guarantee us that unfortunate and unforeseen outcomes will not occur.

However, I think I can clearly foresee the outcome to those vulnerable elderly and disabled clients who request our help if good people like yourself say “no” each time we called to ask for your help. I know this because your having said “yes” on so many days has made such a positive result in the lives of those you have helped – those vulnerable elderly and disabled clients who otherwise would not have had access to vital medical treatment, who might have gone without, or incurred expenses that they would have sacrificed with other important needs.

I want you to know that, for all the times you have said “yes”, you have helped so many by your volunteering. We at DHS, and on behalf of those we all serve, want to thank you and want you to know how much we appreciate your volunteer efforts and regret so much that on this occasion it resulted in such a cost and loss to you in the line of service to others.

John Sherman-Jones, Community Resource Coordinator

Alger-Schoolcraft County DHS

■ *Richard Chaltry is a DHS volunteer in Alger County DHS. He was transporting a disabled DHS client to her medical appointment and experienced a one vehicle accident when his car fishtailed out of control on extremely icy roads in a flash sleet storm. Fortunately no one was injured but Dick's car sustained considerable damage and had to be towed out of a snow bank. "I submitted this letter because it reflects the enormous caring and giving spirit that DHS volunteer drivers demonstrate despite winter driving hazards and little financial reimbursement for their efforts and risk," Sherman-Jones said.*

Date: March 20

To: Cynthia Farrell, Director
DHS Office of Adult Services

Subj: Ruth McMahon

I am writing to commend Ruth K. McMahon for her excellent assistance and advice. She has served as my adult foster care home licensing consultant on behalf of Michigan Department of Human Services for the past year. Ms. McMahon demonstrated unwavering patience and aplomb as she provided all of the necessary paperwork, guidelines, rulebooks, procedures and protocols in hopes of outlining the requirements for small group homes within the state of Michigan.

(I am) a novice in the adult foster care specialization and in human services as administered and regulated through governmental municipalities. I had little experience with the unique challenges of creating a foster home that would both fulfill a vision for providing an unparalleled standard of care for the aged within the framework for a licensed adult foster care home

Within the state of Michigan, Ms. McMahon gleaned the fact that I was inexperienced from our numerous interactions. However, instead of her being exasperated or discouraging me from something that has been an aspiration of mine for quite some time, her support was unyielding. Even when I became frustrated and weary, Ms. McMahon's dedication to her responsibilities as a licensing consultant and hard working mentality kept her from succumbing to my exhaustion.

In fact, through working closely with Ms. McMahon, I have a greater understanding of the ideology that the state of Michigan and other governing bodies similarly set forth as requirements for adult foster care homes. Her willingness to go over and beyond what she was required to do in giving empirical evidence of that which has been successful and that which has proved problematic for past group homes in regards to both the paperwork and the logistics of the group home itself proved invaluable. She allowed me to digest the mechanisms in place to make sure both the receivers of care and the caregivers have a reciprocally wholesome and beneficial relationship.

I applaud Ms. McMahon for her ability to offer prudent attention to my needs and for maintaining a high level of professionalism while also relating to me as a person for whom she is an advocate. I am well aware of the monotonous and laborious drone that beleaguers those who dedicate themselves to service work – especially within the context of being responsible for a large state, district or region. I think dedicated professionals like Ms. McMahon are all too often overlooked and seldom given acknowledgment for a job well done largely because the ability to multi-task with extraordinary care and efficiency becomes an expectation and, therefore, rarely receives praise.

However, I want to be as prudent and attentive as Ms. McMahon was in her consultation work by writing this letter to commemorate her excellence and asking that she receive special attention and recognition for her tireless work. She is an asset not only to the state of Michigan but also to the adult foster care population she oversees. I look forward to working with her in the future and “seeing my tax dollars at work,” as she would say.

Loretta Green

Lathrup Village

Gratiot DHS bowlers strike gutters for local donation

From Dan Carley, Community Resource Coordinator
Clinton/Gratiot County DHS
CarleyD2@michigan.gov

A group of Gratiot County DHS employees raised money for a local charity and had fun at the same time earlier this year.

For the second year in a row Gratiot staff participated in the annual Big Brother-Big Sister "Bowling for Kids" fundraising event. This year they raised more than \$500 for this worthwhile cause.

The group – known as the DHS – Down Home Strikers – not only bowled their way to victory but also changed their name from last year's "Gutter Balls Gotta' Count For Something". Wonder why!

A special thanks was sent to the group from the Big Brother-Big Sister agency noting that, "Their support will help us match more children in our community with mentors. Thank you for your commitment to helping the children in our community!"

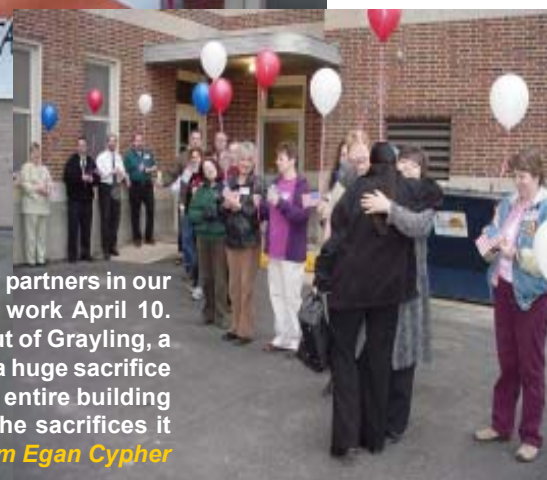


Pictured l-r are the Gratiot DHS "Down Home Strikers" – Kelly Ritter (ES), Bridget Vermeesch (FIS), Amy Byrne (FIS) & Abbey Brooks (FIS).



Left: Tracy Segura standing with her homecoming banner and story.

Below: Tracy's reception line on arrival at work April 10.



Welcome back Tracy!

Grand Traverse and Leelanau DHS staff, along with state of Michigan agency partners in our building, welcomed **Tracy Segura**, a word processing assistant, back to work April 10. Tracy served for 15 months in Iraq as part of the 1071 Maintenance Corps out of Grayling, a National Guard unit deployed under the U.S. Army. As a single parent, it was a huge sacrifice for Tracy to be away from her daughter for that length of time. The staff and entire building wanted to show Tracy how much they appreciate her service as well as the sacrifices it entailed. Welcome Home Tracy!

– From Egan Cypher

Submitting Letters

1. Ensure your supervisor knows and approves.
2. Have the client sign "Consent for Publication" form (MS Word template 0199.dot).
3. Send the letter and a copy of the signed consent form by email or fax to 517-373-8471.
4. Include the letter writer's hometown and job classification of employee(s) cited in the letter.

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